



FIA Matters!

Family Independence Agency • Lansing, Michigan • December 6, 2004
Produced by FIA Office of Communications, Suite 1510, Grand Tower, Lansing
Submit stories by e-mail to FIA-Newsletter@michigan.gov

Today's big story

Weatherization Day demonstration held in Battle Creek

By Stacie Gibson

FIA Bureau of Community Action and Economic Opportunity, Lansing
GibsonS2@michigan.gov

On Oct. 15 a Battle Creek family opened their home to local politicians, the news media and community members to showcase the benefits of the Weatherization Assistance Program. As part of a statewide series of events leading up to "Weatherization Day" on Oct. 30 each year, the Community Action Agency of South Central Michigan in Battle Creek partnered with the Dayton family and other weatherization programs from around the state to conduct a weatherization demonstration house.

"Our demonstration house family was Lorrie Dayton, a mother of four," said Cindy Tremblay, housing manager for the Community Action Agency. "In her previous home her children were exposed to lead and tested positive. We chose this home because we wanted the visitors to get a real taste of the homes we weatherize."

Tremblay said the two-story structure was selected to give visitors exposure to the wiring, a nonoperating furnace with asbestos-covered ducts, unheated crawlspace and ban joist without insulation.



The blower door instructional station showed guests how the rate of air leakage in a home is measured as part of the weatherization process.

Attendees got a tour of the Dayton home that included stops at several instructional stations. Each station provided a first hand look at the various aspects of home weatherization including sidewall insulation, combustion appliance testing, refrigerator metering, attic insulation, and air leakage reduction. Participants were provided with weatherization and energy conservation brochures and additional information about other Community Action Agency programs available to low-income households.

Name change and FIA Web site

Based on the agreement between the Family Independence Agency and Michigan Department of Information Technology, the FIA public Web site banner will change to the Department of Human Services on Jan. 30, 2005. The main button text will show DHS instead of FIA. The Web address will change to www.michigan.gov/dhs and anyone going to the old address of www.michigan.gov/fia will be automatically redirected to the new address. All navigation paths and linking within the Web site will not be affected by the address change.

For two weeks beginning Jan. 30, 2005 a notice will be posted on the public site home page announcing that all references to the Family Independence Agency are in the process of being changed to the Department of Human Services within the site. Forms and publications will be changed over a longer period of time and the name will not be changed on previously posted documents such as press releases, newsletters and reports.

Weatherization assistance is a federally funded home energy conservation program providing free services to low-income Michigan residents. Families receiving weatherization services can expect heating costs to be reduced 20-25 percent amounting to about \$300 in savings per year.

The FIA Bureau of Community Action and Economic Opportunity administers the Weatherization Assistance Program. The program is carried out locally by the state's 30 Community Action Agencies and three Limited Purpose Agencies. For more information about Michigan's program, or to locate the agency serving your area, please visit FIA Web site: www.michigan.gov/fia-weatherization

Click to read...

Local office news..... 2

Your letters4

Halloween at Allegan County FIA

By Sharon Lee Vandevrede
Allegan County FIA, Allegan
VandevredeS@michigan.gov

Allegan County continued a Halloween tradition this year, with employees celebrating Halloween by decorating aisles and wearing costumes, with treats supplied by management. Each group of employees who share an aisle pick a theme and decorate.



Allegan County's Dead End Cemetery group with scariest costume winner Mariah Schaefer at left.

Inset: best costume winner Don Mead.

The **Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation** was founded on a promise made between two sisters – Susan Goodman Komen and Nancy Goodman Brinker. Suzy was diagnosed with breast cancer in 1978, a time when little was known about the disease and it was rarely discussed in public. Before she died at the age of 36, Suzy asked her sister to do everything possible to bring an end to breast cancer. Nancy kept her promise by establishing the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation in 1982 in Suzy's memory. It is estimated 40,110 women will die from breast cancer in the U.S. this year.

This year's themes included: Charlie Brown and the Great Pumpkin; the lab from the television show "Crime Scene Investigation"; the Dead End Cemetery; CPS City & Red Flag Alley complete with yellow "Do Not Cross" tape from the Sheriff's Department; and an Interactive game show isle – FIA What? – with "Vanna" and host quizzing the supervisors.

First place winners in the aisle judging went to the staff from the Dead End Cemetery aisle. Their prize was a gift certificate from an Allegan downtown eatery for the entire group. The best costume prize of a gift certificate to a downtown eatery went to **Don Mead** as the Nerd. The scariest costume prize of a certificate to a downtown eatery went to **Mariah Schaefer** as the Mummy.

We awarded a participation prize to those who contributed to the decorations and costume efforts and refreshments for all completed the day.

Alpena-Presque Isle employees fight cancer

Linda Ewing, Family Independence Specialist
EwingL@michigan.gov

Alpena and Presque Isle FIA recently participated in Lee Jeans for Denim Day. On Oct. 8 employees donated \$5 each to wear jeans. The money was donated to **Susan B.**

Komen Breast Cancer Foundation.

Participation was 100 percent! Many of the employees also purchased shirts to wear on this day and \$5 of each purchase also went to Susan B. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation.

Some of the employees are shown with their shirts and denim in the photo. As a seven-year breast cancer survivor I just want to say, "What a great bunch of people!"



Wayne County employees dug deep into their pockets for breast cancer

By Sandra Szeliga, Program Section Manager
Wayne County FIA Greenfield-Joy District, Detroit
SzeligaS@michigan.gov

With only three days of planning, and a lot of hard work on the part of our coordinators, Wayne County employees dug deep into their pockets for the opportunity to wear denim on Oct. 8. With our participation in the National Lee Denim Day, Wayne County employees were able to contribute \$3,743 to the **Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation**.

All Wayne County offices, as well as Cadillac Place employees, participated in this fundraiser. Special recognition went to CFS Central Operations for being the top collection site with \$353. Second place recognition went to the Greenfield-Joy District with \$317 in contributions and North Central CFS was third with \$315 in contributions.

Shiawassee FIA staff reach new heights

By Susan Fulton, Director
Shiawassee County FIA, Owosso
FultonS@michigan.gov

The Shiawassee Council for Child Abuse Prevention held a "roof sit" fundraiser on Oct. 15-16 to raise funds for a Child Advocacy Center. The council has joined forces with the Wednesday morning Shiawassee-Owosso Kiwanis group to bring a Child Advocacy Center to Shiawassee County. The center will serve as a safe place to support children who have been the victims of abuse. Shiawassee County prevention worker **Shirley Schnell** took the lead in collecting funds from the staff at the Shiawassee FIA. In one day she was able to collect \$625 to present at the "roof sit". With several of her coworkers braving a very rainy day, she rode to the roof and presented our donation for this worthy endeavor.

Shiawassee County FIA fundraisers (l-r) Shirley Schnell, Jessica Kincaid, Leah Thomas, Alesha Bower and Rodney Weisenberger during the "roof sit".



"Bubble man" turns fun into science at Maxey Center

Information: Michael Ball
Northfield Township Library, Whitmore Lake
Telephone (734) 449-0066

The residents at W. J. Maxey Boys Training School in Whitmore Lake got educational entertainment of a different type when the "bubble man" came to Maxey Oct. 9. In a program made possible by the Northfield Township Library, the bubble man spent a day entertaining and enlightening more than 100 Maxey students with a blend of science and magic.

Students listened to bubble talk and watch the bubble man produce bubbles-in-bubbles, cube bubbles and merry-go-round bubbles that seem to defy the laws of nature. In the process, they learn about such concepts as soap films, light refraction and surface tension. And they had a lot of fun.

The program was held in Maxey's state-of-the-art Media Center where students have access to a wide range of books and can even take courses in library science. Maxey librarian **Jamie**

Jackovich was delighted with the Bubble Man. "Literacy is not just about pencils, paper and books any more," said Jackovich. "It's about storytelling and visual and tactile communication. This program brings it all."

The bubble man, a.k.a. Ron Loyd, director of the Northfield Township Library, was also enthusiastic. "I've been doing bubble shows for 16 years," said Loyd. "The ones at Maxey were among the most gratifying." Loyd received 30 thank you notes from the boys at Maxey, but this one seems to sum up their feelings: "Your stories and humor were a rare treat here at Maxey... You helped most of us get back in touch with our good-sided youthfulness we had tried to forget."



Bubble man Ron Loyd doing his thing with residents at W.J. Maxey Training School.

Berrien County FIA director Jerry Frank with foster parents during the appreciation dinner in September.




Berrien FIA 2004 foster parent appreciation dinner

By Kim Celmer, Foster Home Licensing Specialist
Berrien County FIA, Benton Harbor
CelmerK@michigan.gov

Berrien County FIA sponsored a foster parent appreciation dinner at the Lake Michigan College Sept. 15 where more than 100 foster parents attended. Judge Mabel Johnson-Mayfield from Berrien County Family Court was the keynote speaker. She spoke about the FIA, courts and the entire community's appreciation of the foster parents for their commitment to "our" kids.

The judge spoke of the fear and anger that usually accompanies a child's initial placement and the perseverance of the foster parents to provide love, stability and guidance to these sometimes very difficult children. Mayfield thanked foster parents for their courage and determination to assist the children of our community at a very traumatic time in their lives.

Berrien FIA foster care licensing specialists **Kimberly Celmer** and **Michelle Kuiken** presented certificates of appreciation to each foster parent. Twenty-two foster parents were recognized for their service ranging from 5-20 or more years. Also attending and recognized for their support of the children and foster parents were Gene Rose, FIA Board vice-chair, Family Court Judges Thomas E. Nelson and Gary J. Bruce, Chief Assistant Prosecuting Attorney Arthur Cotter, and Family Court Assistant Prosecuting Attorneys Margaret Penninger and Jay Respasso.



Your letters,
intercepted
and otherwise

Date: Nov. 22
To: FIA Matters!
Subj: [Larry Hawkins](#)

Larry Hawkins, FIA's resident cellular service expert, has accomplished significant cost savings in FIA's cellular expenditures statewide. FIA's statewide cellular expenditures are 40 percent less than they were in FY 2002 when they were estimated at over \$1.2 million annually. These expenditure reductions have far exceeded the governor's reduction requirements of 15 percent. Larry's diligence, hard work and creative efforts have saved FIA more than a half million dollars over the past two fiscal years. These actions exemplify FIA visions and values. Congratulations Larry and keep up the good work!

[Ruth Goldman](#), Director

FIA Telecommunications, Lansing

■ *Larry Hawkins is a member of FIA Telecommunications Unit in Lansing.*

Washtenaw County community forum for Family to Family

By Verdetta Love, Acting Services Section Manager

Washtenaw County FIA, Ypsilanti

LoveV@michigan.gov

On Oct. 26 Washtenaw County Family Independence Agency marked their first year implementation of Family to Family – also known as F2F – with a community forum. This forum took place at Christian Love Fellowship Ministries International in Ypsilanti. Opening remarks at the event were given by Monica Tijerina of the Washtenaw County Human Services Collaborative Council. The invocation was by Apostle Robert Hill, senior pastor of the church.

We had two of our foster parents tell us about their impacts on fostering. One encouraged our audience to become foster parents. The other spoke of the roles of foster parents and encouraged the audience to consider fostering more of our teenagers.

There was a brief slide show presentation involving benchmarks of each of the core strategy groups – recruitment, training, & support, building community partners, team decision making and self-evaluation.

One member of the team decision-making strategy group, an attorney, expressed that F2F has changed her views about FIA and what they represent to our children. She admitted that she had participated in all of the core strategy groups until she found the right fit for her. She has been very involved with our efforts in F2F.

Two youths – a current foster child and a former foster child – spoke about themselves. “Brandon” expressed that, no matter the age of a child, he or she still needs a family. He spoke of how becoming a father has helped him to change because he used to run from his placements. He also mentioned that clothing orders need to be increased.

“Denise” said she is currently attending Eastern Michigan University and working on a degree in social work. She said she still keeps in touch with her foster parent, who also spoke at the forum. Both youths are participating on Washtenaw County's Youth Board, a part of the Jim Casey Youth Opportunity Initiative. Both also spoke very highly of their caseworker, saying he made a big difference in their lives because of his support.

Longino Gonzales, FIA deputy director of children's services, was also present and spoke briefly of the positive impact that Family to Family is having in Michigan and of the commitment of Washtenaw County FIA staff. He too was very impressed by the youths that spoke.

Family to Family is an initiative that focuses on the safety and best interest of the child in making decisions about when and if to place a child in out of home care. The most important principle of Family to family is that every child deserves a family.

■ To learn more about Family to Family visit the Annie E. Casey Web site www.aecf.org or subscribe to Michigan's F2F Listserv by contacting CowanD@michigan.gov

■ For more information about which counties are participating in F2F contact MehrenM@michigan.gov

FIA Matters! is a product of Michigan's Family Independence Agency
Marianne Udow, Director Karen Smith, Director, Office of Communications
Larry VanDeSande, editor Submit stories by e-mail to: FIA-Newsletter@michigan.gov